**PRESS ARTICLE**

**Mex, Switzerland, 11th March 2025**

**BOBST CI Flexo: enhancing the customer experience through innovation**

**Transforming packaging businesses across the world, BOBST CI flexo presses are known for their intelligent design, high productivity, exceptional print quality and user-friendliness. This article explores this customer-centric and sustainable printing technology, with insights from converters leveraging growth opportunities through BOBST innovation.**

CI (central impression) flexo presses remain a cornerstone of global flexible packaging production, serving brand owners across a wide range of categories such as fresh and frozen food, drinks, dairy, snacks and confectionery, beauty, personal and home care, pet food, pharmaceuticals, and many more.

A pioneer in this market, BOBST continues to introduce new technological innovations that enable packaging converters to meet the evolving needs of their brand owner customers. Underpinning this drive is BOBST’s vision for the future of packaging production: a profitable future that is built on the principles of digitalization, automation, connectivity, and sustainability for the benefit of converters, brand owners and consumers alike.

Italy-based printing and packaging company Fiorini has observed a significant shift in the packaging market in recent years, where print quality is now essential to reflect the premium quality of the packaged product. According to Giovanni Fiorini, President & CEO: “Extremely high-definition multi-color images can now be an important distinguishing element for brands. The choice of BOBST as technology partner has allowed us to elevate print quality further and grow our business.”

**Growth and opportunities**

The flexo printing market across all applications is forecast to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.0% to 2029, according to the latest Smithers report. In flexible packaging, consumption is predicted to increase at a CAGR of 4.2% in between 2023 and 2028, with market value reaching $341.6 billion by the end of that period. Notably, biodegradable and compostable packaging is expected to expand at an 8.8% CAGR to reach 1.17 million tonnes in 2029.

Despite opportunities, challenges persist in CI (often referred to as ‘wide web’) flexo. Run lengths are getting shorter, prices are being squeezed, and fewer people are entering the industry, making it harder and harder to find qualified press operators. Above all, brand owners’ sustainability targets must be met to satisfy the desire for greener products and the increasing legislative pressures. All this while still being capable of offering high quality, full color consistency and faster delivery.

Allowing converters to take advantage of growth potential and address challenges, BOBST offers a robust portfolio of CI flexo presses for flexible packaging, including the EXPERT CI, VISION CI and MASTER CI. Each model has been tailored to bring multiple benefits to flexo printers operating in the global wide web market through innovative automation features, clever connectivity, and waste-reducing capabilities.

**A vision for flexo success**

To demonstrate the power of BOBST’s flexo technology, new VISION CI and EXPERT CI printing presses have recently been established at the Bielefeld Packaging Center. Customers visiting this state-of-the-art facility in Germany will be able to experience the highly modular concept and multitude of automation features that make the VISION CI and EXPERT CI stand out from the competition.

Showcasing the flexibility in configuration, the VISION CI and EXPERT CI have been set up for 10 colors, but should the customer choose, they can opt for 8 colors plus a varnish station and a white ink station. The intelligent design of the press allows further downstream units (flexo or gravure) to be integrated for special applications, either from the start or retrofitted at a later stage. As a result, it offers excellent price-performance value with extensive substrate versatility and superior print quality, as well as being easy to use and safe for operators.

Mar-Co Harbor Group, in Benton Harbor, Michigan, USA, is one of many customers that have chosen the VISION CI, configured with smartGPS offline plate mounting to offer a faster service. Tom Eversole, President and CEO, explained: “In selecting a flexo press to expand our capabilities, speed was a number one priority. We focus on short lead times while retaining the high quality we are known for, and the VISION CI brings exactly that. It ticks every technology box for us, providing the ability to compete in form fill seal packaging.”

Purchased to increase capacity, the VISION CI is the second BOBST press for Al-Shamrani in Saudi Arabia. Ali Muhammad Al-Mashmarani, General Manager, is highly satisfied with the investment. “It’s clear that enhanced automation is key, and BOBST VISION CI absolutely delivers. The press features automatic opening and closing bearings, alongside a preload system. Ease of use means we access extremely fast machine startup, user-friendly access to all print decks, and simple maintenance,” he stated.

**One complete solution**

Together with the NOVALAM S 550 solventless laminator, the VISION CI and EXPERT CI can be integrated as an element of BOBST “One complete solution” ecosystem, which is orchestrated through the digital workflow platform BOBST Connect. One complete solution also includes smartGPS for plate mounting and the DIT (Digital Inspection Table) for quality assurance.

“Our complete flexo solution from BOBST is a break with the gravure tradition in this region, but I’m proud to say that this new approach has paid off, without compromising on quality,” stated Junny Kumala, General Manager of CPI Flexible Packaging in Indonesia. “Run lengths are getting shorter – some are ultra-short, just 3000 to 8000 meters per job – and customers want just-in-time delivery. Fortunately, with our BOBST setup, we can meet those demands with high-quality packaging delivered in just three days.”

Ms Kumala added: “The various automation features on the BOBST flexo press aid our operators, speed up production, and increase productivity. Importantly, they also greatly reduce the resources needed for setup, saving ink, materials, and energy.”

**Consistent color and low waste**

BOBST CI flexo incorporates groundbreaking innovations, developed to ensure exceptional color reproduction and product quality as well as low waste creation.

Multiple converters have successfully implemented BOBST oneECG (Extended Color Gamut) technology, which optimizes color matching, making it consistent and repeatable. By printing all colors with a fixed set of inks – CMYK alone or in combination with orange, green, and violet – they have eliminated the need for costly spot colors and excessive job changeovers. With digitalized color matching, the involvement required from the operator is also minimized, so fewer color variations caused by human errors appear and less skill is needed in the press room.

CPI embraced BOBST oneECG technology with great results, according to Ms Kumala: “As well as reducing waste, we are seeing much faster makereadies and higher productivity with BOBST oneECG because the inks stay on the press. The color consistency is also very high, both across the print run and for repeat jobs – a crucial factor for brand owners.”

Luis Antonio Mora, CCO (Chief Customer Officer) at Litoplas in Colombia which invested in a VISION CI with oneECG, echoed this sentiment: “oneECG technology has revolutionized our printing operations, allowing us to rely less on spot colors, streamline the process and reduce waste, ensuring better outcomes and a much more efficient workflow. We have observed significant improvements in both efficiency and image quality, leading to consistent, predictable results, simplified job repeatability, and overall greater productivity.”

**Optimizing press setup**

Tackling another of the bottlenecks that may eat away at profits is BOBST smartGPS (Graphic Positioning System) which also saves considerable time and reduces material and ink usage during setup.

Considered a game-changer in prepress, smartGPS plate mounting technology automatically generates registration and impression settings offline during the mounting stage and communicates these to the press digitally or via an RFID chip. By performing this procedure away from the press, the job will be ready to print immediately upon loading of the cylinders, requiring no additional operator input. This allows the job to start more quickly and with less waste compared to traditional press setup methods.

Tom Eversole of Mar-Co Harbor Group is a big fan. He highlighted the compact footprint of the VISION CI press and, in particular, smartGPS technology, which he said: “Combines press automation with the fastest and most accurate flexo plate mounters to give us greater flexibility for small runs. The result is unprecedented speed when it comes to our production volume.

**Conclusion**

Ali Muhammad Al-Mashmarani, General Manager at Al-Shamrani in Saudi Arabia, explained how BOBST technology is giving the company a distinct competitive edge: “Like many packaging converters around the world, we’re keen to expand our capacity and shorten our lead times, without compromising quality for our customers. The packaging market is very competitive, and we must take every edge over the competition. That’s what BOBST brings to our business, and the VISION CI flexo press was the ideal choice.”

With its focus on digitalization, automation, connectivity and sustainability, BOBST’s vision is driving developments in CI flexo printing, providing converters worldwide with the solutions they need to succeed in the fast-changing packaging world.

**IMAGE CAPTIONS**

TLA\_#2 The VISION CI delivering best in class price-performance value

TLA\_#3 The DIT works seamlessly with inline quality control systems enabling proactive production decisions

TLA\_#4  Customer engaging with a oneECG sample in CI Flexo

TLA\_#5  BOBST smartGPS in action during mounting

TLA\_#6  Customers engage with innovative materials in CI Flexo packaging production

**About BOBST**

We are one of the world’s leading suppliers of substrate processing, printing and converting equipment and services for the label, flexible packaging, folding carton and corrugated industries. Our vision is to shape the future of the packaging world based on four pillars: connectivity, digitalization, automation and sustainability.

Founded in 1890 by Joseph Bobst in Lausanne, Switzerland, BOBST has a presence in more than 50 countries, runs 21 production facilities in 12 countries and employs more than 6 400 people around the world. The firm recorded a consolidated turnover of CHF 1.891 billion for the year ended December 31, 2024.

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